

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Cherilyn Inouye
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Ka'elepulu Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 530 Keolu Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Kailua State HI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 96734-3938

County Honolulu County

Telephone (808) 807-0800 Fax (808) 266-7813

Web site/URL <https://www.kaelepulu.k12.hi.us/> E-mail cherilyn.inouye@k12.hi.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Keith Hayashi E-mail keith.hayashi@k12.hi.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Hawaii Department Of Education Tel. (808) 784-6161

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Warren Haruki
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 185 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 41 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 35 High schools
 - 34 K-12 schools
- 295 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- ☐ Urban (city or town)
☒ Suburban
☐ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	25
1	19
2	27
3	21
4	35
5	36
6	30
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	193

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 11 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 9 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 35 % White
 - 32 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 10%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	188
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish, Tagalog

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %

Total number students who qualify: 27

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 10 %
Total number of students served 19

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>3</u> Developmental Delay	<u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>4</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 2 %
Total number of students served: 4

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 1

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	9
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	94%	97%	96%	97%	0%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2015

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Our Ka‘elepulu School ‘ohana work together in a KĀKOU (inclusive) way to support the growth and success of every student in becoming lifelong learners and contributing citizens.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Civil%20Rights/NoticeEnglish.pdf>

18. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Home of the Ladybugs, Ka‘elepulu Elementary School is located in Kailua on the Windward side of O‘ahu. It is one of three public schools encircling Ka‘elepulu Pond and framed by the three peaks of Olomana Mountain. Our school has maintained its original structure as a single two-story classroom building since 1973. Ka‘elepulu means "moist blackness," which refers to the dark moss that grew in what was once an important freshwater pond on its site. When construction began, a swarm of ladybugs took to the air around the campus; thus, the mascot of our school made itself known. Our school colors, yellow and orange, reflect the brightness of the sun and, metaphorically, the bright futures of our students.

On any given morning, you can find all 194 Ladybugs, grades Kindergarten through 6th, gathered before the school building. They belt out the school song while parents, teachers, and school staff join in. This small snapshot of our Ka‘elepulu Elementary School family will leave you with the realization that each member there is exactly where they belong. The morning wraps up with student leaders guiding the school community through a series of “brave breaths,” a core practice of the Choose Love Social Emotional Learning (SEL) enrichment program, interwoven with Hawaiian language and values. This is how the Ladybugs start each day, as an ‘ohana (family), exemplifying Kaelepulu’s mission of working together in a kākou way to support the growth and success of every student in becoming lifelong learners and contributing citizens.

Along with the Choose Love SEL enrichment program, our school fuses two other schoolwide initiatives enabling Ka‘elepulu to realize its mission. Where Choose Love provides students with a formula for strengthening relationships, Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ) frames that formula in a Hawaiian context. Philosophy for Children (p4c) then gives students the tools and processes to apply Choose Love and HĀ. Throughout the day, students practice these SEL and HĀ components to ensure that all members of the campus community feel physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe.

All students actively engage in authentic learning from the first bell to the last bell each day. A group of young students can be seen feeding the fish in the aquaponics in the center of the courtyard. Another group of 5th graders weigh the food compost and track data for the school as part of the Zero Waste Program. Conversations about favorite books buzz between 3rd grade and Kindergarten reading buddies. Multiple classes can be seen on a live video call with a navigator aboard a sailing canoe to Tahiti. Students and teachers each paint their own star in the galaxy on our school mural with a local artist from the community. Sixth grade students lead multi-aged groups in quarterly p4c (Philosophy for Children) sessions where students think together around a common stimulus. Afterschool enrichment programs gather students across grade levels to create art masterpieces. Through these unique learning opportunities, bolstered by strong partnerships, Ka‘elepulu strengthens students' sense of community and belonging.

Ka‘elepulu Elementary School was recognized as a 2015 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program Exemplary High Performing School. Additionally, Ka‘elepulu was listed as the top elementary school in the state by Honolulu Magazine in their ranking of Hawai‘i public schools. Each year there are 40-50 students on the waitlist to attend Ka‘elepulu Elementary through a Geographic Exemption. These distinctions are primarily based on our school’s high achievement on state assessments. However, on annual surveys, students and parents report academics are not the only reason why Ka‘elepulu is special. They state what sets Ka‘elepulu apart is the feeling of a close knit ‘ohana provided by caring teachers and staff, and our support for the growth of the whole child through enrichment programs and co-curricular classes. It is our belief that by nurturing the whole child, student achievement will improve.

Each year Ka‘elepulu welcomes students from other states, countries, and communities, including those from military impacted families who comprise 32% of our student body. Whether they are with us for a few months or a few years, we ensure all students are supported through the transition and their families become part of our ‘ohana. Our strong community and parent involvement is visible on the front lawn of the school at drop-off or pick-up, bustling with our ladybug families either picking up drinks from PTSA or gathering for a movie night. It is the Ka‘elepulu expectation that all school community members collaborate to support each other in learning, developing, and striving for excellence to help students achieve mental,

physical, and philosophical goals.

Upon a special visit to our campus, a professor from the University of Hawai'i perfectly captured the school's culture. He noted, "I get a sense of caring about children. The signs, the body language of the kids, even the elevated nature of the classroom buildings make you feel like you're entering a place where kids are important." At Ka'elepulu Elementary School, our students are the heart of everything that we do.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our ELA curriculum includes a variety of resources to help our students meet the ELA Common Core Standards. The curriculum serves as tools to guide lessons as opposed to using the curriculum with fidelity. Our curriculum includes resources from Fountas and Pinnell (Word Study, Interactive Read Alouds, Shared Reading, Reading Mini-Lessons, and Guided Reading), Heggerty, Scholastic News, class read alouds, and other teacher curated resources. Different grade levels use various combinations of these resources to address grade level standards and students' needs. In grades K-2, there is an emphasis on phonemic awareness and phonics, and learning how to read. In grades 3-6, students engage in novel studies that integrate social studies with the ELA standards.

We use a Balanced Literacy approach that includes instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and word study. We also incorporate the Science of Reading and Orton-Gillingham approaches.

Each year, the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) analyzes the data and determines a Targeted Instructional Area on which to focus. Additionally, they select a Powerful Instructional Practice (PIP) for teachers to learn and implement. Within a cycle of professional learning, we provide our teachers with training, professional readings, and a time for safe practice with peer observations and feedback. In 2021 - 2022, the school's PIP was using the critical reading strategy for informational text. After reviewing data (walk through, Smarter Balanced Assessment, Universal Screener, and Progress Monitoring), we concluded that the critical reading strategy is being effectively used in the classrooms. This school year, our PIP is differentiating student learning via the design and carrying out of Gold Standard Project Based Learning units. This includes creating text sets, learning activities designed for sustained inquiry, student voice and choice opportunities, and authentic assessments. Our units integrate ELA with another core subject such as science or social studies, often with a place based theme.

We use iReady as our universal screener which informs our instruction. In addition, ELA formative and summative assessments include running records, anecdotal notes and observations, and teacher-created assessments.

In all classes, teachers teach in small and whole groups, in order to give students the opportunity to access the grade level standards. Many of the groupings start with information from our universal screener so students are working on similar skills. However, groupings are fluid and change according to subsequent assessed student needs.

Our students use their writing skills across the curriculum. Through narrative, informational and opinion writing, teachers engage students in authentic writing assignments in all classes. They are asked to explain their math work, write a journal piece in social studies or tell a story from a scientist's point of view. We use common writing rubrics through the school to ensure vertical articulation. Using the writing process, students are given multiple opportunities for feedback (teacher, self and peer), revision, and reflection before presenting their final product.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In Math, all students, grades K-6, use Ready Classroom as the core curriculum to meet the Common Core Math Standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP). In addition to Ready Classroom, students complete individualized iReady lessons based on their diagnostic assessment.

During a Ready Classroom lesson, you will see students working on a problem using a variety of strategies and engaging in discussions using sentence stems such as: "I started with _____ because" or "I knew _____ so I _____." As a school, students are taught to use CUBES (Circle the number, Underline the

question, Box the key words, Evaluate the problem, and Solve) to break down the problem. Students use manipulatives such as base ten blocks and counters to help them solve problems.

Additionally, teachers engage students in real world problem solving such as building tiny houses (area), measuring plant growth, and analyzing data they captured through Project Based Learning. They learn that it is important to try different strategies, engage in mathematical discourse, and apply what they learned in class to solving real world problems. In these situations students are meeting the SMPs. Our students use appropriate tools (rulers and measuring tapes), model with mathematics (create area models), and make sense of problems and persevere in solving them (solving problems in the garden.)

We use iReady diagnostic as our universal screener for math. Teachers use a variety of formative (white boards, exit slips, signals, quick writes/draws, etc.) and summative assessments (iReady quizzes and unit assessments and teacher created assessments) to assess student learning. Information from these assessments informs whole group and small group instruction.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our science curriculum is based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). All teachers have been trained in NGSS and receive continuous support from our district resource teachers. This support includes lessons, materials, and training for all teachers who use these resources to supplement their lessons. Students are introduced to concepts with phenomena and generate questions which guide the learning. We use: FOSS (Full Option Science System) kits and textbooks, Generation Genius, Brainpop Jr., and other teacher designed units to engage students in learning.

Science is taught conceptually using the textbook, videos, and other readings, but also through a variety of engaging, hands-on investigations. Students regularly engage in the design and engineering process that includes time for testing, reflecting, and rebuilding. Units include gardening, designing and building rocket cars, designing pollinators, building fishponds, stopping landslides, and building canoes. Field trips and guest speakers enhance learning and tie the learning experiences to the real world.

All students participate in carrying out a science project and presenting in our school wide science fair. At the fair, all students share their learning with an authentic audience. Selected 6th graders represent Ka‘elepulu at the district fair and often are recommended to the state fair.

Our 5th graders take the Hawai‘i State Science (NGSS) Assessment. All students have two opportunities to meet proficiency on the state assessment. All of our teachers (grades K-4) understand that demonstrating proficiency on the state assessment is a shared responsibility in that each grade level is responsible to teach the NGSS standards each year to build upon one another so our 5th graders can be successful.

In all grade levels, summative science assessments include performance assessments as well as quizzes and tests.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

We teach the Hawai‘i Core Standards for Social Studies (HCSSS) in various ways. These standards are integrated into our ELA, Nā Ho‘pena A‘o (statewide framework of Hawaiian qualities, values, culture, and language), General Learner Outcomes, and SEL curricula. In particular, students are engaged in learning HĀ in our social studies units and our partnership with Kauluakalana, in which they visit the Ulupō Heiau and Kawainui fishpond for place-based learning with cultural and environmental practitioners. These experiences inspire our students to understand the importance of our history and community. It creates an enduring understanding of how we belong and our responsibility. Many of the standards are taught through units, some of which have evolved into Project Based Learning units this school year.

At the beginning of the year, all classes create classroom norms in a collaborative manner. These norms are designed to help our students understand the importance of being good citizens in their different communities.

Students participate in collaborative groups to learn about different social studies topics. They research, create, and build to present their findings. Examples of units include fishponds, water rights, biographies, and tide pools.

Teachers have compiled text sets to teach their units. These text sets include fiction and non-fiction pairings to meet the needs of all students and build content area knowledge. Students are able to choose between interesting texts of a variety of levels, genres, and formats to build background knowledge and vocabulary.

Many of our social studies units are assessed with performance assessments. Presentations of learning to a public audience include the 6th grade ancient history play or 3rd grade Day of the Distinguished.

As with all of our core subject areas, students are given the opportunity to self assess and reflect upon their learning.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

In addition to core academic instruction, K-6th grade students are provided weekly enrichment and innovative standards-based curricula taught by specialized teachers for music and art.

Students have the opportunity to showcase their musical and artistic talents at our Winter Program and May Day performances.

In addition to our weekly art and music classes, all students participate in drama lessons from an artist from the Honolulu Theatre for Youth. In this two week program, funded by a grant from the State Foundation for Culture and Arts, students learn drama strategies that help them express their feelings and also understand how feelings can be interpreted. The artists from Honolulu Theatre for Youth work with the teachers to create lessons that teach drama strategies along with ELA, Science, or Social Studies standards.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Students in grades K-5 have one 45 minute PE class per week from a certificated PE teacher. Students in grade 6 have two 45 minute PE classes each week. During PE the students participate in cardio and stretching exercises and learn age appropriate skills of different sports such as soccer, pickleball, and basketball. In the spring, the classes participate in a dance unit culminating with students choreographing their own dance to be performed for the annual May Day program. In addition to weekly PE lessons, we have school wide activities such as Turkey Trot, Jump Rope for Heart, and Field Day. The goal of PE is to teach healthy habits that will last a lifetime. Our guidance counselor teaches health standards related to SEL such as using interpersonal communication skills and practicing health enhancing behaviors through weekly Choose Love lessons. Classroom teachers also integrate the health standards into their curriculum through interdisciplinary ELA and social studies units.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Prior to COVID-19, students were able to visit our school library on a weekly basis to borrow books and technology lessons. Post COVID-19, classroom teachers have taken on the responsibility of sharing books with students in classroom libraries and digital libraries. Additionally, all students have access to a device in their classrooms. Every student has a Google Classroom account. Classroom teachers teach coding, technology and internet safety to students using the Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA) K-12 Computer Science Standards.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

Ka‘elepulu Elementary was the first school in Hawai‘i to pilot the SEL enrichment program, Choose Love, in 2016. Since that time, our counselor continues to teach Choose Love through guidance classes and classroom teachers integrate the big ideas of courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion in action into their lessons. Choose Love concepts and strategies are also woven into our positive behavior interventions and supports. We maintain a close relationship with founder Scarlett Lewis, who recently visited our campus. On that day, a complex wide counselor talk story was held that allowed counselors to gather and discuss the challenges that we are helping students overcome with the program. Later that day, Ms. Lewis addressed students in a schoolwide assembly aimed at helping students show resilience in the face of adversity. That night, parents were invited to campus for a parent night with Ms. Lewis.

Ka‘elepulu is part of the Windward Zero Waste Schools Hui, a group of public schools that compost the waste from school lunches. We contract Zero Waste staff members to assist with teaching students how to separate their food and 5th grade student volunteers learn the science behind composting including weighing the food and feeding the worms in our new Worm Hale (house). The compost and vermicast are sold to the public and all profits support our school gardens, campus beautification, and project-based learning.

Our school is also the first DOE school to pilot a yearlong contracted partnership with the local community non-profit, Kauluakana, which is dedicated to environmental stewardship and cultural preservation. The partnership includes professional learning, field trips, school visits by Kauluakalana staff, and support for teachers in integrating place-based learning with project-based learning.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Through Hawai‘i Multi-tiered Systems of Support (HMTSS) we are closing the achievement gap between high-needs (English learners, economically disadvantaged, and students receiving special education services) and non-high needs students (all other students). In English Language Arts, the gap has steadily decreased from 43 points in SY 2018-19, to 34 points in SY2020-21, to a current gap of 24 points. In math, the gap has remained more consistent, around 25 points.

We provide all students with rigorous Tier I instruction in the classroom to support mastery of academic standards and the General Learner Outcomes (GLOs). Teachers integrate content areas and literacy in Project Based Learning (PBL) to engage students below grade level in authentic learning activities that build relevance. They also differentiate student learning in Tier I, tailoring instruction to meet the needs of all students. For example, text sets allow students to engage in the content at their level. Student voice and choice is central to our Tier 1 program.

Through student engaged assessment, we teach students to monitor their own learning. Students are fully aware of the Learning Target and the Success Criteria by which their work will be evaluated. Students lead parent-teacher conferences and set goals. We are developing more opportunities for students to co-construct rubrics through our third Cycle of Professional Learning focused on self-assessment and peer assessment.

We identify students in need of Tier II or Tier III academic and/or behavior support through the RTI process. RTI meetings are held twice monthly with classroom teacher and RTI team: principal, counselor,

and academic coach. The team uses the Panorama Student Success platform to review attendance, academic, behavioral, and SEL data for all students. We then document and monitor intervention plans in Panorama. Interventions occur during the school day or in after school tutoring sessions (Rainbow Club).

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students performing above grade level. While all students are immersed in a comprehensive, balanced curriculum, students above grade level learn to be self-directed in exploring many areas of interest to discover their passions. Through class presentations and field trips, students can delve deeper through their many opportunities to meet with and learn from experts in their field. These include scientists from the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology, philosophy professors from the University of Hawai'i, leaders from the Hawai'i State House of Representatives and Senate, cultural practitioners, and local realtors and contractors. Even after school, students may extend their learning by selecting enrichment classes such as sewing, pickleball, philosurfers, Wahine Who Run, art, and nature journaling.

One of the six HĀ learning outcomes, a Strengthened Sense of Excellence, from Nā Hopena A'o (HĀ), encourages students to strive beyond what is expected. Built into our state standards-based grading system is the opportunity for students to earn "Meets with Excellence." Students meeting an assignment's success criteria have an open-ended opportunity to extend their learning through rubrics that ask, "If the product exceeds expectations, how does it do so?"

Students performing above grade level benefit from p4c as it sharpens higher order thinking, nurtures wonder and allows them to learn from people with different perspectives.

We also have a gifted and talented (GT) program that fosters the GT students' needs for students in grades 3-6. Our GT program is an inclusion program that focuses on multiple areas of the gifted. The screening process is rigorous. It is based on STREAMS (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, Mathematics, and Social Studies) where students design their own learning experiences within the classroom.

3c. Students with disabilities:

All students start and end their day in their homeroom. Students with disabilities are fully included and receive support from our highly trained staff in their classroom whenever possible. Our special education department meets weekly for training and collaboration to support student success. In addition to a K-3rd grade special education teacher, a 4th-6th grade special education teacher, and two full time special education assistants, we benefit from additional general education paraprofessionals, and specialized DOE personnel.

Our general education teachers routinely collaborate with special education care coordinators to plan differentiated instruction. Flexible grouping is evident in every classroom, and general education students as well as students with disabilities benefit from a seamless flow based on student need. Our staff has worked with Stetson and Associates for professional learning in inclusive practices. This work has helped our students with disabilities to reach 50% proficiency in ELA and math on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA).

One-hundred percent (100%) of instructional staff are Safety-Care Crisis Prevention trained. This helps us to look at the function of student behavior, rather than the behavior alone, in order to support students or identify skills that need to be taught.

3d. English Language Learners:

Our students' home languages include Tagalog, Spanish, and Japanese, but only two students currently qualify as English Language Learners (EL). This student group is not considered statistically significant on the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Our EL students complete the WIDA ACCESS test in February each

year to determine their English language proficiency. The EL coordinator monitors their results and communicates with their parents on how they can support their child at home. Training by the EL coordinator increases the capacity of all staff to build the language levels of students. Students identified as English Language Learners are provided with appropriate strategies and supported by the classroom teacher and/or support staff as outlined in the school EL Plan. Teachers/staff are provided with resources, technical support, and training in EL strategies as needed. All teachers are progressing towards the Hawaii Qualified (HQ) in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) requirement for teachers.

We recognize that the linguistic supports used to develop academic language in ELs can benefit all students. Instructional strategies such as visuals, gestures, and sentence frames are utilized to increase vocabulary and language development across the curriculum for all student groups.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

Excessive tardies and absences continue to be an issue following the pandemic. For the last two years, our average daily attendance has been around 93%. Pre-pandemic we consistently had an average daily attendance rate of 97%. When students are absent, it is for an extended period of time due to illness or travel. Last year 57 students (20%) were chronically absent (15+ days). So far this year, mid-third quarter, 27 students are considered chronically absent. We continue working with families to ensure students are in school daily and on time to take full advantage of the instructional day. We endeavor to change habits and mindsets about attending school that may have begun during distance learning. Our counselor has set a goal to address this issue by focusing on thirteen fourth grade students who were chronically absent last year, by decreasing the total number of absences for this group of students by 20% from 276 absences (SY 2021-2022) to 220 (SY 2022-2023).

To address the pandemic-related increase in chronic absenteeism, as part of the MTSS, we analyze data and evaluate the effectiveness of attendance interventions to update our school attendance tiered intervention matrix. Our attendance clerk monitors daily attendance, and the attendance team meets monthly to review current attendance data, student needs, and interventions. Tiered interventions range from parent notification of unexcused absences, incentives for meeting attendance goals, daily communication, attendance contracts, parent conferences, check-ins with the counselor, and home visits. In line with our approach to student academic and behavior needs, a personalized approach with families continues to be most effective in improving student attendance. We have a cell phone where we can send parents a text if a student is absent, prompting the parent to send the child to school. In addition to our school staff, our district social worker provides additional support to families of students with chronic absences.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

When you step onto our campus, you are welcomed with visual representations of our school values. Our strong sense of community, partnerships, and aloha are reflected in the mural on the multipurpose room, the gazebo built by community volunteers, the colors and values of Choose Love as you walk up the stairs in the main building, and the beauty of our two school gardens that are tended to by school staff, students, and parents.

At Ka‘elepulu, every classroom practices p4c. This teaching pedagogy is founded on building an intellectually safe place for equity of voice. Students are encouraged to take academic risks and ask questions without judgment or ridicule. p4c also teaches students how to think critically and integrates inquiry across the subject areas.

In addition to being infused with intellectual safety, our school is built on a foundation of courage, forgiveness, compassion and gratitude to promote social, emotional, and physical safety. Every student is given the social and emotional tools for success through the Choose Love enrichment program.

We use Panorama student surveys as well as Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS) to monitor students and provide tiered support. Since our school is small, our staff take responsibility for caring for each student. Our students are provided with unique learning opportunities that strengthen their readiness for college and career, and their roles as future citizens and leaders. All students are immersed in a comprehensive, balanced curriculum through enriching specials: art, music, guidance, Hawaiian studies, and physical education.

Students and staff promote a college-going environment through college shirt days. Our annual career day brings volunteers from diverse industries to campus to bring awareness and motivate students to find their passion. Student choice in project-based learning, career projects, and passion projects allow students to further explore their individual interests. Our community partner, Kauluakalana, engages students in real world learning through school visits and place-based exploration of neighboring significant historical, cultural, and ecological sites. Such local partnerships help our students understand and appreciate the place where they live. Our 2nd grade class created a beautiful book based on the cultural significance of the land that our school sits upon. Our 5th grade students wrote an article about the significance of names in Hawaiian culture and specifically the names of our community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

On Wednesdays at Ka‘elepulu, you will see students wearing their yellow school shirts. These shirts were a gift to every child to connect our community and bring unity after the difficult separation during the pandemic. The back design is a picture of a taro plant, drawn by students, framed by our school motto in Hawaiian, E ho‘oulu i ka ‘ike a me ke aloha, which means “To grow in knowledge and aloha.” Our community partnerships help to cultivate the rich spirit of knowledge and aloha in our school.

Students feel connected to our history and place through our partnerships with Kauluakalana and the University of Hawai‘i. They can visit the lo‘i (taro patch) and sink their feet into the soil while using their hands to connect with the earth through planting native species. These hands and hearts on activities give our students a strengthened sense of belonging.

Ka‘elepulu believes in shared leadership with the community and parents of our students. We have a strong Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) which supports our students and teachers through fundraising, community events and service projects to benefit our school and garden. Our PTSA meets monthly, with in-person or virtual options, and representatives share information with staff and families who cannot attend through the classroom newsletters or the ‘Ohana Bulletin.

Our School Community Council (SCC) works together to support and engage our students and community.

This group includes the principal, teachers, school staff, parents, students, and community members. The SCC meets on a regular basis to discuss and provide feedback on our comprehensive needs assessment, academic and financial plan, Strive HI data, and voice community concerns.

Another way that we unite our community is through our weekly email 'Ohana Bulletin that makes accessing our school and information easy for parents and students. The bulletin includes schoolwide updates, announcements, and reminders from administration, staff, Parent Community Networking Coordinator (PCNC) and the PTSA, resources for parents and families, as well as highlights about what students are learning and doing at school. Links to relevant websites, surveys, and forms are included in the bulletin to make it easier for parents to respond and find information. Our website is also updated regularly with current information.

Parents and family members are encouraged to participate in field trips, community work days, student-led conferences, career fairs, classroom activities and our quarterly assemblies. In these assemblies we recognize students for their demonstration of Nā Hopena A'o and the General Learner Outcomes. Students are celebrated with their families.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

We recently held a morning training on modeling with math manipulatives. That same afternoon, an inclusion teacher went back to her classroom and tried out the new learning with students. This growth mindset is characteristic of the professional culture at Ka'elepulu. Staff feel confident to try new things and seek out answers to their questions, often by collaborating with another colleague. Each staff member brings a unique set of strengths and feels comfortable calling on another's expertise.

Teachers share and model best practices through professional learning communities (PLCs), peer observations, and peer coaching and mentoring. One prime example is how our teachers who are trained and experienced in p4c strategies will meet with new teachers to help start p4c circles in the classroom. Professional learning is also valued and encouraged with our classified staff. Weekly special education department meetings include regular professional learning for teachers and educational assistants based on need.

Our Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) is an example of the collaboration amongst our teachers. The ILT examines achievement data to select a targeted instructional area and powerful instructional practice. ILT plans and monitors Cycles of Professional Learning. Through differentiated professional learning, teachers work as a group within an area of interest, culminating in peer observation and reflection. Differentiated professional reading allows for choice of paper or digital texts and choice of content from a curated playlist. A focused approach to professional development, the result of examining data, ensures that deep learning occurs. This highly competent staff welcomes opportunities to grow their practice but teacher voice and choice is critical to our high performance.

Teachers express they feel most able to respond to students' needs when empowered to make decisions about instructional practice and curricula aligned to teach standards. Forty-two percent of the faculty are National Board Certified Teachers or are currently working towards certification. Many have graduate degrees or are currently pursuing graduate degrees in education. As our teachers learn new instructional strategies, we see the impact on the classroom as they implement new approaches and share these ideas with fellow teachers.

In order to be responsive to staff requests for professional development, we work together with community partners, the University of Hawaii, and district resource teachers, providing resources and training opportunities. Staff are naturally self-directed and seek out opportunities to learn.

4. School Leadership:

Teacher collaboration and distributed leadership are critical to our success. Each teacher serves on at least two major groups that align with our school priorities, and all teachers are part of a professional learning

community (PLC). The Steering Committee, composed of the Lower (K-2) Grade Level Chairperson (GLC), Upper (grades 3-6) GLC, Special Education Department Head, and Support Teacher Department Head, meets regularly with the principal to discuss and decide, or provide input and suggest solutions on academic and operational issues that require administrative decisions. The Steering Committee also leads one of the core teacher teams, PLCs, and WASC home and focus groups. Each teacher serves on one of our core teams that focuses on one of the school's major structures and processes for school improvement, including the Academic Review Team (ART), Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), or the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Team. Additionally, each teacher is on a Standing Committee, which works on a secondary priority in the Academic Plan; these committees include HĀ, p4c, Project-Based Learning, and Safety & Wellness. Core teams, PLCs, and standing committees meet at least once a month and are led by teachers. While some decisions fall under administrative prerogative, teachers are the drivers of our school and provide the solutions and input for most decisions about the school's academic programs and operations.

Time for committee meetings, collaboration and learning is built into the master schedule.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As a school in Hawai'i, Ka'elepulu is built on a foundation of ALOHA, which fosters an inclusive learning environment for all students. We aim to teach students the deeper meaning of ALOHA, which goes beyond the superficial definition of "hello," "goodbye," and "love." ALOHA is the coordination of mind and heart within each person. It is made up of five main principles: Akahai (to be kind and compassionate), Lōkahi (to be connected), Olu'olu (to be gentle but strong), Ha'aha'a (to be empty and humble), and Ahonui (to wait for the moment). We nurture these values in our students. Our principal speaks to the students each morning during our Morning Mana'o (thoughts). The students lead this whole school meeting incorporating the pledge, school song, and deep breathing exercises. When the students call up our principal, she shares a story, relatable event or piece of advice with the students that shows these ALOHA values. Each month of the school year focuses on one of these values. Students learn a movement or hand motion to help them remember each part. Teachers are able to tie this into learning in the classroom as well as into their General Learner Outcomes and Nā Hopena A'o. ALOHA also extends to our relationships among staff, with families, and community members. Teachers and staff engage in regular professional learning and staff bonding activities rooted in ALOHA and Nā Hopena A'o. Through teaching and practicing ALOHA, we not only teach students and families about the host culture, but show respect for each student's unique culture and gifts.

Our multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) includes the academic, social, emotional, behavior, and physical health supports we provide every student at Ka'elepulu. As a small school, our staff work closely to help each student to be successful with a team approach. Our MTSS looks at schoolwide practices and updates our annual MTSS plan based on feedback from staff and data from previous years. For academics, social and emotional, and behavior needs, we follow response to intervention (RTI) processes and work as a team to develop an action plan and provide tiered supports and interventions for students. Our attendance team supports students and families who need help with improving daily attendance and timeliness to school. Our health and safety team monitors students who need physical health supports and plans. Our primary aims as a school in ensuring equity are to close the achievement gap and provide an inclusive learning environment where all students feel loved and welcomed at school so they can be successful.

Our equitable practices in the classroom include clear expectations that are set through specific learning targets and success criteria. Students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and how to be successful in achieving. Teachers confer and reflect with colleagues through Professional Learning Communities. These PLC's incorporate multiple grade levels to support the academic spiral of learning. Curriculum maps help ensure that all standards are being met and that students are prepared for future learning.

Our volunteer Aloha Committee promotes staff wellbeing by recognizing the importance of staff's personal milestones.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Central to Ka‘elepulu’s success is our commitment to Philosophy for Children (p4c). p4c is an innovative approach to education in which teachers guide students towards becoming active philosophers about the world around them. Teachers focus their instruction around its four pillars; Intellectually Safe Community, Philosophy, Inquiry and Reflection.

Together, students and teachers explore essential topics through student-led inquiry. The Good Thinker's Toolkit provides skills and terminology for posing questions. p4c is a lens through which we teach content to enhance the entire educational experience for students. p4c pedagogy challenges even the most in-depth thinker to expand their mind.

One strategy for eliciting philosophical discussion is through the practice of a “Plain Vanilla.” Based around a common stimulus, students generate philosophical questions, vote on their preferred question and engage in a deep discussion.

First grade students generated a list of their questions on the topic, How can we take care of the environment/earth? They voted to discuss, “How can we improve our tool making so we can make the Earth better and stronger?” The student who posed this question started the class discussion by reading her question. Through the lesson, students were responsible for encouraging others to participate by recording data about responses and inviting other students to participate. To probe their thinking, a student is tasked with holding up a Why? sign so that students expand their responses to include their reasoning. The instructional effort that precedes this perfectly orchestrated discussion is tremendous, but in this moment, the students lead.

Teachers regularly replicate this process in every classroom. Students follow communication protocols for deep thinking about ideas, building on others' understanding, and listening. This immediately benefits classroom climate, peer relationships, connection and inclusivity. It also has profound, far-reaching implications on students' interpersonal relationships, college and career readiness, language development, and political discourse. Empowered students who think critically, consider the perspectives of others, and develop their voice.

Every quarter we gather in cross age groups for a special school wide p4c Community Day. This is a chance for students to discuss a relevant topic with a cross section of the broader school community.

In addition, to benefitting students, p4c helps our staff develop the ability to practice skillful reflection, take accountability for creating an intellectually safe environment, and foster an innate sense of wonder and curiosity in students.

Philosophers-in-Residence from the Uehiro Academy of the University of Hawai‘i along with school staff support all teachers in their p4c practice through weekly mentorship. In addition, staff meetings begin with a p4c activity to build a sense of belonging and model p4c strategies. In a faculty meeting dedicated to p4c , staff generated and discussed the philosophical question, What does a school day look like when developing “good thinkers?” This led to new wonderings like How do we decide what is a “good thinker?” A staff member suggested that a “good thinker” goes beyond the right answer. That led us to wonder, Does our school structure limit students?

Using p4c, staff are continuously challenging our beliefs and ideas around instructional practice. The heart of this discussion is representative of all our efforts. We continually strive to grow our ability to be responsive to our students and enrich their learning.